

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 3, 2017

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
And Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
And Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
And Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
House Appropriations Committee  
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Price  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
And Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Collins, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price:

We write as a bipartisan bicameral delegation to request the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development continue to provide the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) with \$150 million in federal funds for critical capital and safety improvements.

As you know, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA, PL 110-432) created this successful federal-state partnership under which the three WMATA jurisdictions collectively match this funding with another \$150 million each year. Without federal participation, this delicate funding partnership would unravel, leaving a massive shortfall in WMATA's capital budget.

The federal government relies on Metro. Many Metrorail stations were built at the request of the federal government, and more than one third of all stations are located on or proximate to federal facilities. Federal employees comprise nearly 40 percent of WMATA's peak ridership, and millions of others use the WMATA system (Metrorail, Metrobus, and Metro's Paratransit programs) each year for business or personal visits to the Nation's Capital. WMATA also serves a unique national security role, providing transportation for federal employees traveling to and from the Pentagon and Department of Homeland Security and ensuring continuity of federal operations during an emergency. WMATA is central to most federal agency emergency preparedness plans, a necessity that was proven on September 11, 2001. The system is also indispensable for transporting large crowds attending events of national importance, such as the Presidential Inauguration and Fourth of July on the National Mall.

For all these reasons, Congress saw fit to provide a unique authorization for WMATA, recognizing the special responsibility the federal government has to help "America's Subway" fulfill these functions safely and reliably. In addition to serving as an important transportation link for the federal government, WMATA has



spurred \$37 billion in economic development, helping to create thousands of jobs through private sector development around Metrorail stations.

We do not dismiss the challenges Metrorail faces – created by a combination of under-investment in infrastructure and unsatisfactory agency performance. Recent safety issues, including a high-profile fatal incident in 2015, have shined a light on the vast scope of the system’s safety challenges. We all agree on the need for WMATA to demonstrate major improvement in safety, reliability, and customer service. Yet we strongly emphasize that better performance from WMATA and reliable funding from Congress and the jurisdictions are complementary goals. Both must be achieved in order for WMATA to reverse a concerning downward trend in ridership – which will simply put more of its 750,000 daily rides back onto already-congested highways – and earn back the trust of visitors and daily commuters.

We believe it is worthwhile to draw your attention to a number of recent actions WMATA has taken, led by General Manager Paul Wiedefeld, that demonstrate the agency’s seriousness about addressing its challenges:

- WMATA continues to make progress on safety upgrades as identified by both National Transportation Safety Board accident investigations and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in its new safety oversight role. WMATA closed 29 safety recommendations since March 2016 and 17 additional recommendations since December. It has submitted an additional 86 for review and potential closure.
- In June, WMATA will conclude the SafeTrack maintenance program to repair the worst defects in the Metrorail system. Thus far, WMATA has replaced more than 20,000 fasteners and more than 29,000 ties. By the end of SafeTrack, more than 50,000 ties will have been replaced, reducing the number of defective ties to fewer than 5,000.
- At the conclusion of SafeTrack, WMATA will begin industry standard Preventive Maintenance (PM) programs. Prior to SafeTrack, these critical programs had either been inadequately implemented or not carried out to a degree sufficient to deliver meaningful results. The five PM programs that WMATA will initiate after SafeTrack are Systemwide Tamping and Surfacing (T&S); Interlocking Component Maintenance; Mechanical Joint Maintenance; Traction Power Cable Meggering; and Earth-to-Ground Stray Current Testing. These will be predominantly carried out during non-passenger service hours. A well-resourced PM program is critical to ensure the long-term safety and reliability of WMATA’s aging infrastructure.
- By the end of 2017, all 1000 and 4000 series railcars will be retired and replaced, significantly improving safety and reliability. Safety and maintenance glitches on railcars are responsible for the majority of service delays on the Metrorail system. Continued funding is essential to ensure that WMATA can continue to purchase new railcars with advanced crash-resilient technology and replace older cars in the fleet.
- Last December, FTA lifted the grant drawdown restrictions it placed on WMATA in July 2015, due to WMATA successfully completing the corrective actions necessary to address the weaknesses and deficiencies identified in the 2014 Financial Management Oversight review.
- General Manager Wiedefeld is making the tough decisions necessary to instill a new safety culture and to allocate limited resources, including by designating all managers as “at-will” employees and eliminating approximately 1,000 positions (8 percent of its workforce), and terminating individuals responsible for safety transgressions. The General Manager has personally led an effort to improve WMATA’s safety culture stating, “safety trumps service”.



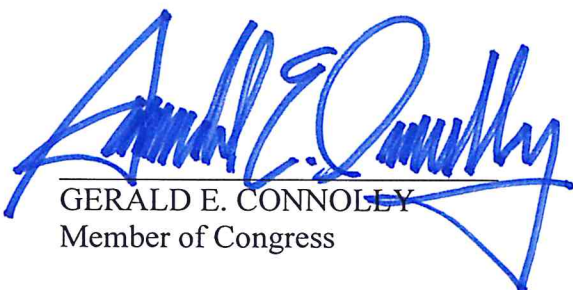
- Under an agreement with wireless carriers, WMATA-managed workers are installing the cables necessary to provide cell phone service in all Metrorail tunnels, as required by PRIIA. Today, all 91 Metrorail stations (including 47 underground stations) provide service. Cable installation will be complete by the end of 2020, with service becoming available in stages.

In sum, WMATA is making progress on returning the system to a state of good repair. However, without continued investment by the federal government, that goal will not be reached. WMATA will invest \$1.25 billion in the capital program during its Fiscal Year 2018, which begins on July 1, 2017. The PRIIA commitment to WMATA represents approximately 25% of this capital budget. This planned investment includes \$528 million for railcars, \$127 million for rail systems, including state of good repair rehabilitation and a new radio and wireless communication infrastructure, \$113 million for track and structure state of good repair, \$191 million for station and passenger facility improvements, and \$211 million for bus and paratransit. These capital investments will ensure WMATA can continue to improve safety and reliability. It is critical, now more than ever, to maintain the federal commitment to WMATA to continue this progress.

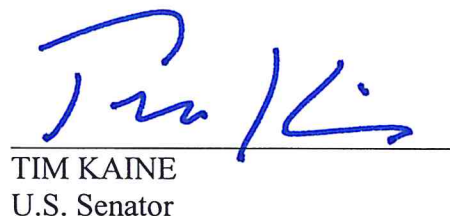
We understand the Subcommittees face difficult choices and must focus limited resources on essential services. We firmly believe that WMATA more than meets those criteria, and we respectfully request that they continue supporting the full \$150 million for WMATA in Fiscal Year 2018. This funding will maintain the federal government's commitment to ensure that residents and visitors to the National Capital Region have access to a safe and reliable public transportation system.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

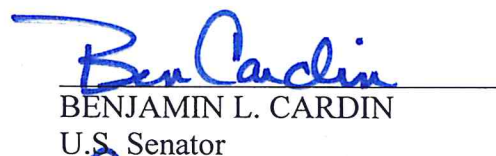
Sincerely,



GERALD E. CONNOLLY  
Member of Congress



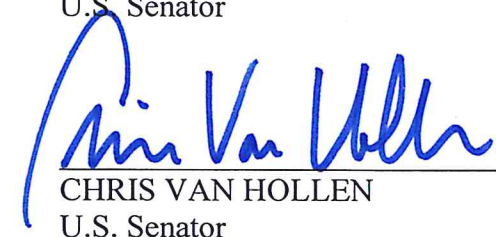
TIM KAINE  
U.S. Senator



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN  
U.S. Senator



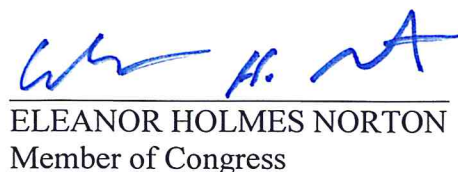
MARK R. WARNER  
U.S. Senator



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN  
U.S. Senator



STENY H. HOYER  
Member of Congress



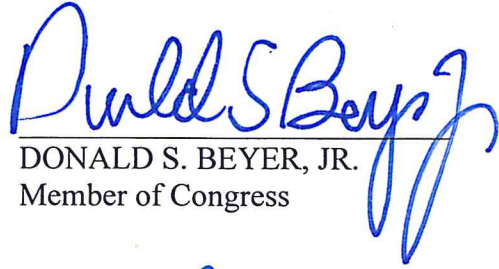
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON  
Member of Congress



JOHN P. SARBANES  
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